4: Roth E-4 (no date) 1891 OC6 Iban OC6

of travelling among the Dyaks of Western Borneo, to whom the notes left by my late son refers, I distinctly remember the importance attached to the omens derived from the flight of birds and the position from which the notes of birds and of various insects reached them. The omens also derived from the examination of the viscera of the pigs which are killed for the festivals held on all important occasions are most carefully observed, and no feast which I have attended was commenced until after a fowl had been killed, the blood mingled with rice stained yellow with turmeric, and thrown up towards heaven by the chief, who at the same time offered a prayer, the words of which were not understood by the people.

"Taboo" is much practised among the Dyaks. At the time of planting the seed in the padi fields, no stranger may enter there for several days. The public path frequently passes through them, but during the "taboo," or, as the Dyaks call it, "pamali," a detour must be made to avoid the forbidden enclosure. The existence of the pamali is made known to everyone by dried palm leaves or small branches of bamboo or shrubs placed in a conspicuous position at all the entrances of the forbidden farm. The same practice is used when sickness is in the house, and for the preservation of fruit trees and of anything which it is desired should not be interfered with by the general public. If a Dyak is asked to do anything contrary to custom, he invariably answers, it is "pamali." These remarks refer more particularly to the Land Dyaks of Western Borneo, but are, I believe, equally applicable to the Sea Dyaks, to whom my son's notes more particularly refer.

The *manang*, or medicine man, is of great influence in every tribe, and amongst the Sea Dyaks they have the curious custom of dressing as women, and in all their actions endeavouring to imitate the manners and customs of the female sex; even to the taking to themselves men who are called and pass among the people as their "husbands." The belief in magic is very prevalent among all the natives I have observed in Borneo and the Malay Peninsula, and it has even survived the introduction of the religion of Islam. The magic practices derived from the wild Sakie of the Peninsula are held in great esteem among the Malays of Perak, though discountenanced by the Mahommedan priests. Charms similar to those so widely used in Borneo are in use also among the even less cultivated Sakies and Semangs of the Malay States, and consist of the same articles, such as abnormal growths, nodules of plants, stones of unusual appearance, beads, teeth, and other articles. These often form a bundle of two or three pounds' weight, and on occasions of unusual importance, as in exploring an unknown district or ascending a high mountain, are suspended round the neck.

The tiger, though not an inhabitant of Borneo, is, as a mythical animal, held in great reverence by all the tribes—the largest cat in the island is that which is, I believe, called "Felix macrocelis," by Dutch authors, but I have heard that a skull of what was

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

10. *Defensive Warfare.*

726 If the Dyaks have reason to apprehend an attack upon their village, they put it immediately into a state of defence, *i.e.*, they raise a tall palisade around it and encircle this again with a wattle fence and *chevaux de frise* of spiked bamboos. The waterside, the landing-places, and the approaches to the village, are all spiked, and also the foot of the ladder, and they dig pit-falls in the pathway. Their valuables they conceal in the adjoining forest, or in the vicinity of their farms. The moment [209] the enemy appears the sound of the *tawah* begs to announce their condition to their neighbours, and to summon them to their assistance. If they are heard help is sure to arrive *instanter*. If they feel confident of their ability to repel the enemy, they keep their women at home; but if there is any doubt about the matter, they conceal them with their treasures on the hills and flee into the forest to rejoin them at a rendezvous when resistance becomes hopeless. If they are in no hurry they fire the village before they leave it; if on the other hand they wish to gain time, and to divert the pursuit, they leave it for the enemy to plunder and burn.

A favourite stratagem is to entice the leading boats of the enemy into an ambush on shore. As everybody is anxious to be foremost in the race for heads, there are sure to be one or two boats so far in advance of the rest as to make it worth while to put them to their mettle. Some convenient spot is selected and a strong party placed in ambush among the trees. One or two men are thrown out to stroll upon the shingly bed to lure the enemy to their destruction. The moment they are caught sight of, the boats give chase, and as the warriors leap ashore, the men in ambush spring from their covert to their feet and hurl stones to shatter the shields, and engage with spears and swords in a short but desperate conflict. As the main body is seen winding up the river, whooping and yelling, and crashing up in clouds of spray and with a rush of waters, they plunge into the thicket with the heads they have obtained, and are far away before the enemy have recovered from their discomfiture, and are prepared to follow.

Another stratagem is one of ambush. When the head of the column is close upon them (the ambush), they discharge their muskets, leap from their ambuscade, and engage in a hand to hand combat. The Dyaks always waylay on the right-hand side of the line of march, as that side of the body is unprotected by the shield, which is carried in the left hand. A short, but desperate fight ensues, a few heads are taken, and the enemy scampers off with their dead and wounded

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

726 417 This fence is about six feet high, and surrounds the whole village. Two gates are made in it, but when these are closed, they present the same appearance as the rest of the palisading.

726 The landing-places and approach to the village are all protected with sharpened spikes of bamboo or hard wood. Their valuables—their jars and brass gongs, etc.—they conceal in the jungle.

If they feel confident that they are able to repel the attack of the enemy they keep the women and children at home. If there is any doubt about the matter, they too are hidden away in the forest, and when resistance becomes hopeless, they are rejoined by their relatives at some fixed rendezvous.

[201] The moment the enemy appears, the gongs are struck in a peculiar manner, three strokes following each other very rapidly, a short pause, and then three strokes again, and so on. When the neighbours hear this, they recognize the signal, and know that their friends have been attacked, and they hurry to their help.

A favourite stratagem of defence in the lower reaches of the river is to entice the leading boats of the enemy into an ambush on shore. There are sure to be some boats of the attacking party far in advance of the others, as they are anxious to be foremost in the fight. The defenders choose a convenient spot, and a strong party is placed in ambush among the trees. One or two men stroll upon the shingly bank to lure the enemy. As the warriors from the attacking boats leap ashore, the men in ambush spring from their hiding-place. They throw large stones at them, and break their wooden shields. They engage with swords and spears in a short and desperate conflict. As the main body comes round the

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

and he could pack them all up and carry them off to the security of his own dwelling.

"Several similar collections of charms have at different times been given to me, obtained from *manangs* who have become Christians, but it was particularly interesting to me to have a set actually in use exhibited and explained by their owner."

The Dyak medicine-man, either by means of medicines, or by the use of charms, or by his incantations, is supposed to be able to cure all diseases. But, as I have said, the two terrible epidemics of cholera and smallpox are beyond his powers. No witch-doctor will approach any case of these, however well he may be paid.

So great is the fear of the Dyaks for either of these diseases that, when a man falls ill of cholera, all his friends desert the house in which he is, and he is left to manage for himself. In the case of smallpox those who have already had the disease may stop and nurse their friends, but the others all leave the house and build for themselves shelters in the jungle. Very often people die of smallpox or cholera simply because they are too ill to cook food, and have no one to attend to their wants.

When there is smallpox or cholera in the country, the Dyaks plant by the path leading to the house a post with a cross-bar attached to it. This is to show others that they may not come up to the house. To disregard such a signpost is punishable according to Dyak law.

When I was stationed at Temudok, very early one morning, I heard someone calling out from the landing-stage by the river-bank. I got out of bed, and went to the veranda and shouted out to the man that he was to come to the house if he had anything to say to me.